WORLD CHRONICLE

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PROGRAMME: **"WORLD CHRONICLE"**

GUEST: Mr. Stoyan Ganev, President, 47th Session United Nations General Assembly

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Yvette Collymore, Inter Press Agency
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SYNOPSIS

General Assembly President

Stoyan Ganev, President of the 47th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, reviews the work of the Assembly in the new era of international co-operation. The speeches in the Assembly reflect the significant changes the world experienced in the last few years. Mr. Ganev believes that the UN General Assembly can play a constructive role in preventive diplomacy.

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VOICE: From United Nations Headquarters in New York, this is **WORLD CHRONICLE**, an unedited interview programme about major global issues. Here now to introduce our guest is the host of today's **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns and this is **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

The United Nations General Assembly is one of the principle organs of the world organization. In it, all countries, whether large or small, rich or poor, are represented on equal footing. This year, the General Assembly opened its forty-seventh regular session with a large number of world leaders converging on United Nations Headquarters, stating their countries' position on a wide range of issues.

Our guest today, Stoyan Ganev, is the President of the current session of the United Nations General Assembly. Mr. Ganev is also the Foreign Minister of his country, Bulgaria. He'll be interviewed here at United Nations Headquarters in New York by Bhaskar Menon, of PTI-TV of India; Yvette Collymore, of Inter Press Service; and Evgueni Menkes, of Tass. Mr. Ganev, welcome to **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

Mr. President, the collapse of old systems, including that in Bulgaria, your country, has produced a number of new problems -- quarrels, ethnic quarrels, economic problems, dangers, in fact, wars actually taking place. What do you think the United Nations is equipped to do, to deal with the situation in these very dangerous times?

GANEV: Yes. You are right that the collapse of the old system - the collapse of Communism, is quite obvious. But at the same time, the United Nations and the world are now faced with the

problems that are connected with the fall of the Communist system: the lives of the people in the ex-Communist countries, and especially ethnic problems. For example, in my country, Bulgaria, we have managed to find the best solution for the ethnic problems and as a result, the Turkish minority is included in the parliamentary mechanism in Bulgaria. And I think this decision can be an example for other new countries that realizes the possibility for a transition toward democracy and market economy. But in any case, the United Nations faces many problems which we can decide, and we can solve, only on the basis of serious deep discussions.

LITTLEJOHNS: The Security Council seems to be in virtually permanent session these days. Do you feel that perhaps the Security Council is taking on too many responsibilities and that the broader membership -- there are 179 members of the General Assembly -- the broader membership of the United Nations should perhaps be more active in trying to find solutions to the world's problems?

GANEV: I think the United Nations is assisting the Security Council, the General Assembly, and other institutions, which are very important mechanisms for the best solution of the world's problems. But we must find the tools, first of all, for the best relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Especially, we must think about the specific role of the General Assembly in world diplomacy. I'm sure that this session will be a concrete contribution for this objective.

LITTLEJOHNS: Do you think perhaps it's time to expand the membership of the Security Council, which now has fifteen members, and notably absent are the two economic powerhouses of the world, namely Germany and Japan? Do you think they should become permanent members and that the Council should be expanded?

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GANEV: Yes. This is very difficult, but a very important problem. I think the Security Council, as all other institutions of the United Nations, must reflect the changes in the world, especially when we are talking about the Security Council. Maybe the possibilities of reforms in the United Nations in the Security Council are now becoming a reality. Germany, and Japan, can be members of the Security Council, but of course, this is only one proposal. I think we will have opportunity this year to discuss this question deeper.

MENON: Mr. Ganev, you've just sat through what is probably one of the most grueling experiences a diplomat can go through, which is to sit on the podium of the General Assembly and listen to a hundred and seventy speakers tell you what they think of the world. What do you think, after having gone through this experience, what do you see as the major issues before the Assembly?

MENON: I think for the past three to four weeks I have become more experienced, because of these speeches. For me, and I'm sure for all the delegations in the United Nations, the speeches are important because they reflect the changes in the world, and they reflect the most important tendencies in world relations. I began to understood the position of many countries concerning their problems in economical, social, and political relations, and on the basis of these speeches, I think we can continue more constructively our work in the General Assembly.

MENON: But is there, can you identify some broad themes that might mark the work of this Assembly?

GANEV: I think the situation is very good now with the General Assembly, and I'm sure that we will manage to reach success with the efforts of all delegations, and of all people who work in

the system of the General Assembly.

COLLYMORE: Mr. Ganev, there is the idea that there are so many items before the General Assembly that it could not possibly efficiently accomplish its work. Do you have any idea how the items could be compressed? Is there any other way that the Assembly could proceed and efficiently accomplish what it should do?

GANEV: The agenda you know, consists of maybe one hundred and forty-five items, and this by the way, is one of the problems of the work of the General Assembly. There are so many items we must discuss, yes -- discuss in depth, and I think we can combine some items, some problems of the agenda, and, for example, when we begin to discuss item 10, an agenda for peace, the report of the Secretary-General, we can regard at the same time many other problems which are connected with An Agenda for Peace. We can also discuss the situation in the regions in Africa, in Latin America, in Europe, and at the same time the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations.

MENKES: Mr. President, this session is the first session of the General Assembly after the dismemberment of the Soviet Union, the former Soviet Union. And all the fifteen former Soviet Republics are sovereign members of the Sovereign States, and members of the United Nations. How do you visualize their debut in the General Assembly? What input do they bring to the work of the General Assembly? What is their debut for the United Nations, and what is the United Nations for those countries?

GANEV: This is a very important time for the United Nations and its work, now that ex-Soviet Republics are sovereign, independent states, and Members of the United Nations. I listened to the speeches of the representatives of these countries, and I

could understand the changes in these independent States, and the new attitude of the States to the world situation and to the role of the United Nations. I am happy that we now have possibility to work together with these independent countries. They have made very important concrete proposals for the future of the United Nations, for the future of the relationship between United Nations and other regional organizations, and the conflict in many regions in the world, especially in Asia. For example, the speech of the President of Kazakhstan is a very good example for this approach to a situation in the world in Asia. Maybe you remember that the President of Kazakhstan proposed an idea to think about the creation of a new organization for the security and stability in Asia. I think this is very important idea.

LITTLEJOHNS: The programme is **WORLD CHRONICLE**, our guest is the President of the General Assembly of the United Nations, Stoyan Ganev. Mr. President, you, at the age of thirty-seven, are the youngest president of the General Assembly ever. If I may say so, until fairly recently, you were not all that world known outside your own country. Now of course you are an international figure. Can you tell us a bit about your personal history, how you rose to this high office, first of all as Foreign Minister of your country, and now as President of the General Assembly, at such an early age?

GANEV: I was an assistant professor of constitutional law in the university in Sofia before the changes in Bulgaria and frankly speaking, I didn't believe that I would have this possibility to take part in the democratic political life in Bulgaria. I didn't believe, the life in Bulgaria was so bad. But the changes in the world, including the changes in the Soviet Union -- you know that Bulgaria was a country with special relations with the Soviet Union.

LITTLEJOHNS: Some people used to call it the Sixteenth Republic, I think.

GANEV: Yes, the Sixteenth Republic. The Communist regime did this. But the changes in the world determined the changes in Bulgaria, and the situation in my country was very difficult because we hadn't real opposition. The regime was more than terrible -- so we began to create oppositional activities. But at the same time, I think we managed to form a very strong opposition, because after one year, the elections in October of last year, we managed to win, and the Communist regime was destroyed. Now, I am a representative of the first non-Communist government in Bulgaria and my activities, of course, are connected to this fact. As a Foreign Minister of Bulgaria, I am proud that I represent this country, that I can say that we managed to find the best solution to the ethnic problems in the Balkans. This is a very important fact, because if we didn't manage to find a solution, Bulgaria could be as, for example, Bosnia. But in my country at this moment, there is stability -- political, and economic. Of course we have many difficulties -- many difficulties, from the economy to social and political points of view. But I'm sure that we will manage. Because this is logic and this is history.

MENON: The changes you've just described in the world have had impact on the General Assembly itself, in that the Assembly, as you know, functions on a group basis. Much of the work of the Assembly is done between groups and in group consultations. And the Eastern European group, such as it was, was constituted on ideological grounds. It was the Communist group of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. What effect have the changes in the world had on the group, working in the group situation in the Assembly?

GANEV: This is very good question. As you know, there are regional groups in the United Nations, but these regional groups usually discuss their problems, for example, which are connected with the candidatures.

LITTLEJOHNS: For the various offices of the United Nations.

GANEV: Yes. I think that there are possibilities to create some informal groups within the General Assembly, within the United Nations. For example, when we discuss the Item 10 of the agenda, An Agenda for Peace, I will invite the representatives of all regions, or connected with the regional organizations, to take part in the informal discussions. I think we can combine the possibilities of the regional organizations and the United Nations. This approach will allow me to use the possibilities of these regional organizations, which are existing here in the United Nations, CSE, Islamic Conference, and many other organizations in the world. This is only one of the opportunities. These representatives can be regarded as friends of the President of the General Assembly, but we will have some informal meetings in an informal atmosphere. I think this atmosphere will provide the best conditions for constructive discussion. This is only one example.

MENON: But is the Eastern European Group functioning?

LITTLEJOHNS: The which group?

MENON: The Eastern European Group.

GANEV: This regional group, of course, will exist. But at the same time, as I said, we can form other informal groups in the framework of CSE. Eastern European Countries, and ex-Soviet Republics are members of CSE. We can organize these countries, in

the United Nations, who want of course to take part in discussions on the subjects of the agenda of the United Nations.

LITTLEJOHNS: CSE is the overall group for Europe.

GANEV: Yes, including the United States and Canada. But there are other regional organizations: the European Community, NATO, and NACC of NATO which means North Atlantic Cooperation Council of NATO. Many countries from Eastern Europe, and from the ex-Soviet Union, now take part in this council. Now, the Baltic countries, they are organized in specific regional structures where we can discuss the specific problems contained in the agenda this year. You know that we have some problems in the agenda, such as the problems with the ex-Soviet troops in Baltic countries. This will be very good and very important to discuss in an informal atmosphere the possibilities, not just to discuss the candidatures in the United Nations.

COLLYMORE: I'd like to go back to the restructuring question. There have been suggestions that there could be a special session next year to discuss that. What are the chances of it coming up in the session, and is the special session being discussed at all?

GANEV: A special session about?

COLLYMORE: About the restructuring process, to deal specifically with that.

GANEV: Yes. I think next year we will have the opportunity to organize special sessions and special meetings because the General Assembly I think, will be a working world parliament, an effective working parliament. Not only to discuss, but to take concrete and efficient decisions. The first problem I think, now is

connected with the new situation in the world, and the reflection of the situation in the work of the General Assembly and the United Nations as a whole. An Agenda for Peace, this is a challenge for the United Nations, including the General Assembly. Now, we have a very important specific task, which is to find the role of the General Assembly in the implementation of the principles and values of preventive diplomacy and peace-making activities. Of course, other activities of the United Nations.

MENKES: Mr. President, you told us that your country Bulgaria, managed with the national problem inside the country, and managed to have stability, while a number of former Soviet Republics were not that lucky. There are a lot of serious national-based conflicts in those countries. Do you believe that the United Nations can play an important role to settle down those conflicts?

GANEV: I'm sure that the United Nations will play this role. Not only the United Nations, of course, but other regional organizations can be useful in this aspect, in this field. The United Nations can be a wonderful instrument, because it is a universally unique organization. For example, the situation in middle Asia. Now, I talked with the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, and we talked about the situation in Tajikistan. I know that the situation is difficult, but the United Nations can be useful; I was speaking about preventive diplomacy and the role of the General Assembly. I think that in the weeks ahead, we can discuss all these problems including the possibility of the General Assembly carrying out preventive diplomacy in regional conflict areas, before the areas becomes a "conflict region".

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. President, that's all the time we have. Thank you know for joining us on this edition of **WORLD CHRONICLE.**

Our guest has been Stoyan Ganev, President of the forty-seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly. He was interviewed here at United Nations Headquarters in New York by Bhaskar Menon of PTI-TV of India; Yvette Collymore of Inter Press Service; and Evgueni Menkes of Tass.

I'm Michael Littlejohns. Thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with us for the next edition of **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

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